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CHAPTER XIII.

AN UNLOOKED-FOR VISITOR.

ALL my endeavours to ascertain the steps by which I came to occupy my present abode were fruitless, inasmuch as Captain Bubbleton contrived to surround his explanation with such a mist of doubtful, if not impossible circumstances, that I gave up the effort in despair, and was obliged to sit down satisfied with the naked fact, that it was by some soldiers of his company I was captured, and by them brought to the guard-house. Strangely enough, too, I found that in his self-mystification, the worthy captain had invested me with all the honours of a staunch loyalist who had earned his cracked skull in defence of the soldiery against the mob; and this prevailing impression gave such a tone to his narrative, that he not only set to work to trace back a whole generation of Burkes famed for their attachment to the House of Hanover, but also took a peep into the probable future, where he saw me covered with rewards for my heroism and gallantry.

Young as I was, I hesitated long how far I dare trust him with the real state of the case. I felt that in so doing I should either expose him to the self-reproach of having harboured one he would deem a rebel—or, by withdrawing from me his protection, give him, perhaps, greater pain by compelling him to such an ungracious act. Yet, how could I receive attention and kindness under these false colours? This was a puzzling and difficult thing to resolve; and a hundred times a day I wished I had never been rescued by him, but taken my chance of the worst fortune had in store for me.

While, therefore, my strength grew with every day, these thoughts harassed and depressed me. The continual conflict in my mind deprived me of all ease; and scarcely a morning broke, in which I had not decided on avowing my real position and my true sentiments; and still, when the moment came, the flighty uncertainty of Bubbleton's manner—his caprice and indiscretion—all frightened me, and I was silent. I hoped, too, that some questioning on his part might give me a fitting opportunity for such a disclosure; but here again I was deceived. The jolly captain was far too busy inventing his own history of me, to think of asking for mine; and I found out from the surgeon of the regiment, that according to the statement made at the mess-table, I was an only son, possessed of immense estates—somewhat encumbered, to be sure, (among other debts, a large jointure to my mother)—that I had come up to town to consult the attorney-general about the succession to a title long in abeyance in my family, and was going down to the house in Lord Castlereagh's carriage, when, fired by

the ruffianism of the mob, I sprang out, and struck one of the ring-leaders, &c. &c.

How this visionary history had its origin, or whether it had any, save in the wandering fancies of his brain, I knew not; but either by frequent repetition of it, or by the strong hold a favourite notion sometimes will take of a weak intellect, he so far believed it true, that he wrote more than one letter to Lord Castlereagh, to assure him that I was rapidly recovering, and would be delighted to receive him—which, whether from a knowledge of the captain's character, or his indifference as to my fate, the secretary certainly never took any notice of whatever.

Bubbleton had too much experience of similar instances of neglect to be either afflicted or offended at this silence; on the contrary, he satisfied his mind by an excuse of his own inventing, and went about saying—"I think we'll have Castlereagh down to-day to see Burke," until it became a cant on parade, and a jest at mess.

Meanwhile, his active mind was not lying dormant. Indignant that no inquiries had been made after me, and astonished that no *aide-de-camp*—not even a liveried menial of the viceroy's household—had come down to receive the daily bulletin of my health; and somewhat piqued, perhaps, that his own important services regarding me remained unacknowledged, he set about springing a mine for himself which very nearly became my ruin.

After about ten days spent by me in this state of painful vacillation, my mind vibrating between two opposite courses, and seeing arguments for either, both in the matter-of-fact shortness of Miss Bubbleton's not over-courteous manner, and the splendidly-liberal and vast conceptions of her brother, I went to my bed one night, resolved that on the very next morning I would hesitate no longer; and as my strength would now permit of my being able to walk unassisted, I would explain freely to Bubbleton every circumstance of my life, and take my leave of him, to wander, I knew not where. This decision at length being come to, I slept more soundly than I had done for many nights, nor awoke until the loud step and the louder voice of the captain aroused me from my slumbers.

"Eh, Tom—a good night, my lad? How soundly you sleep! Just like the Lachigong Indians: they go to bed after the hunting season, and never wake till the bears come in next fall. I had the knack myself once, but then I always took six or seven dozen of strong Burton ale first—and that, they said, wasn't quite fair; but for a white man, I'd back myself for a thousand to-morrow. But what's this I have to tell you? Something or other was in my head for you. Oh, I have it! I say, Tom, old fellow, I think I have touched them up to some purpose. They didn't expect it—no, hang it! they little knew what was in store for them. They weren't quite prepared for it. By Jove, that they weren't!"

"Who are they?" said I, sitting up in my bed, and somewhat curious to hear something of these astonished individuals.

"The government, my lad!—the castle—the private sec.—the major —the treasury—the board of green cloth—the—what d'ye call them? —the privy council."

"Why, what has happened them?"

"I'll show you what's happened. Lie down again and compose yourself. He won't be here before twelve o'clock; though, by-the-by, I promised on my honour not to say a word about his coming. But it's over now."

"Who is it?" said I, eagerly.

"Oh, I can't tell now. You'll see him very soon, and right glad he'll be to see you—so he says. But here they are—here's the whole affair." So saying, he covered the bed with a mass of newspapers, and blotted, ill-written manuscripts, among which he commenced a vigorous search at once.

"Here it is. I've found it out. Listen to this:—'*The Press*, Friday, August 10.—The magnificent ourang-outang that Captain Bubbleton is about to present to the lady lieutenant——' No; that isn't it. It must be in Faulkner. Ay, here we have it:—'In Captain Bubbleton's forthcoming volume, with which we have been favoured with a private perusal, a very singular account is given of the gigantic mouse found in Candia, which grows to the size of a common mastiff——' No; that's not it. You've heard of that, Tom, though; haven't you?"

"Never," said I, trying to repress a smile.

"I'm amazed at that. Never heard of my curious speculations about the Candian mouse! The fellow has a voice like a human being—you'd hear him crying in the woods, and you'd swear it was a child. I've a notion that the Greeks took their word 'mousikos' from this fellow; but that's not what I'm looking for. No, but here it is. This is squib No. 1:—'Tuesday morning.—We are at length enabled to state that the young gentleman who took such a prominent part in defending the military against the savage and murderous attack of the mob in the late riot in College-green, is now out of danger; being removed to Captain Bubbleton's quarters, in George's-street barracks, he was immediately trepanned——' Eh? trepanned! No; you weren't trepanned; but Pepper said you might have been though, and he'd just as soon do it, as not;—so I put in trepanned.——'The pia-mater was fortunately not cut through.' That you don't understand; but no matter—hem, hem——'Congestion of——' hem, hem——'In our next, we hope to give a still more favourable report.' Then here's the next:—'To the *aide-de-camp* sent to inquire after the "hero of College Green," the answer this morning was—"Better—able to sit up."' Well, here we go. No. 3:—'His excellency mentioned this morning at the privy council the satisfaction he felt at being able to announce that Mr. * * * * (from motives of delicacy we omit the name) is now permitted to take some barley-gruel, with a spoonful of old Madeira. The Bishop of Ferns and Sir Boyle Roach both left their cards yesterday at the barracks.' I waited a day or two after this; but—would you believe it?—no notice was taken—not even the opposition papers said a word, except some insolent rascal in *The Press*

asks—'Can you tell your readers are we to have any thing more from Captain Bubbleton?' So then I resolved to come out in force, and here you see the result—'Friday, 20th—It is now our gratifying task to announce the complete restoration of the young gentleman whose case has, for some weeks past, been the engrossing topic of conversation of all ranks and classes, from the table of the viceroy to the humble denizen of Mud Island. Mr. Burke is only son and heir to the late Matthew Burke, of Cremore, county of Galway. His family have been long distinguished for their steady uncompromising loyalty; nor is the hereditary glory of their house likely to suffer in the person of the illustrious youth, who we learn is now to be raised to the baronetcy, under the title of Sir Thomas Bubbleton Burke, the second name assumed to commemorate the services of Captain Bubbleton, whose——' Of course I dilated a little here to round the paragraph. Well, this did it. Here was the shell that exploded the magazine; for early this morning I received a polite note from the Castle; I won't tell you the writer though—I like a good bit of surprise; and, egad, now I think on't, I won't say any thing more about the letter either, only that we're in luck, my lad, as you'll soon acknowledge. What's the hour now? Ah! a quarter to twelve; but wait, I think I hear him in the next room; jump up, and dress as fast as you can, while I do the honours."

With this the captain bustled out of the room, and although he banged the door after him, I could hear his voice in the act of welcoming some new arrival.

In spite of the sea of nonsense and absurdity through which I had waded in the last half hour, the communication he had made me excited my curiosity to the utmost, and in some respect rendered me uneasy. It was no part whatever of my object to afford any clue to Basset by which he might trace me, and although much of the fear I had formerly entertained of that dreaded personage had evaporated with increased knowledge of the world, yet old instincts preserved their influence over me, and I felt as though Tony Basset would be a name of terror to me for my life long. It was quite clear, however, that the application from the Castle to which he alluded, could have no reference to the honest attorney; and with this comforting reflection, which I confess came somewhat late, I finished my dressing, and prepared to leave my room.

"Oh! here he comes," cried Bubbleton, as he flung open my door, and announced my approach. "Come along, Tom, and let us see if your face will let you be recognised."

I scarcely had crossed the threshold when I started back with affright, and, had it not been for the wall against which I leaned, must have fallen. The stranger whose visit was to afford me so much of pleasure was no other than Major Barton: there he stood, his arm leaning on the chimney-piece, the same cool malicious smile playing about the angles of his mouth, which I noticed the first day I saw him in the glen. His sharp eyes shot on me one quick searching glance, and then turned to the door, from which again they were directed to me, as if some passing thought had moved them.

Bubbleton was the first to speak, for not noticing either the agitation I was under, or the stern expression of Barton's features, he ran on—

"Eh, major! that's your friend—isn't it? changed a bit I suppose, a little blanched, but in a good cause you know, that's the thing. Come, Tom, you don't forget your old friend, Major——what's the name?"

"Barton," repeated the other drily.

"Yes, Major Barton; he's come from his excellency. I knew that last paragraph would do it—eh, major?"

"You were quite right, sir," said Barton slowly and distinctly, "that paragraph did do it; and very fortunate you may esteem yourself, if it will not do *you* also."

"Eh! what! how *me?* what d'you mean?"

"How long, may I beg to ask," continued Barton in the same quiet tone of voice, "have you known this young gentleman?"

"Burke! Tom Burke! bless your heart, since the height of that fender. His father and mine were school-fellows. I'm not sure he wasn't my godfather, or at least one of them—I had four." Here the captain began counting on his fingers. "There was the Moulah, one; the Cham, two——"

"I beg your pardon for the interruption," said Barton, with affected politeness: "how long has he occupied these quarters? that fact may possibly not be too antiquated for your memory."

"How long?" said Bubbleton reflectingly. "Let me see—here we are, in August——"

"Three weeks, on Tuesday last," said I, interfering to prevent any further drain on so lavish an imagination.

"Then you came here on the day of the riots?" said Barton.

"On that evening," was my reply.

"On that evening—just so: before or after, may I ask?"

"I shall answer no farther questions," said I resolutely: "if you have any charge against me, it is for you to prove it."

"Charge against you!" said Bubbleton laughing. "Bless your heart, boy, don't mistake him: they've sent him down to compliment you. Lord Castlereagh mentions in his note——where the devil did I throw that note?"

"It's of no consequence, captain," said Barton drily: "his lordship usually entrusts the management of these matters to me. May I learn is this young gentleman known in your regiment? has he been at your mess?"

"Tom Burke known among us! Why, man, he's called nothing but 'Burke of ours'—he's one of ourselves—not gazetted you know, but all the same in fact. We couldn't get on without him; he's like the mess-plate, or the orderly-book, or the regimental snuff-box."

"I'm sincerely sorry, sir," rejoined Barton slowly, "to rob you and the gallant forty-fifth of one upon whom you place such just value. But 'Burke of ours' must consent to be Burke of mine at present."

"To be sure, my dear major—of course, any thing convivial—nothing like good fellowship; we'll lend him to you for to-day—one day, mark me, we can't spare him longer—and now I think of it, don't press him with his wine, he's been poorly of late."

"Have no fears on that score," said Barton, laughing outright: "our habits of life, in his circumstances, are rigidly temperate." Then turning to me, he continued in an altered voice—"I need scarcely explain to *you*, sir, the reason of my visit: when last we parted I did not anticipate that our next meeting would have been in a royal barrack; but you may thank your friend here for my knowledge of your abode——"

Bubbleton attempted to interpose here a panegyric on himself, but Barton went on—

"Here is an order of the privy council for your apprehension, and here——"

"Apprehension!" echoed the captain, in a voice of wonderment and terror.

"Here, sir, is your committal to Newgate. I suppose you'll not give me the trouble of using force; I have a carriage in waiting below, and request that we may lose no more time."

"I'm ready, sir," said I, as stoutly as I was able.

"To Newgate!" repeated Bubbleton, as overcome with fright he sank back in a chair, and crossed his arms on his breast. "Poor fellow! poor fellow! perhaps they'll bring it in manslaughter—eh? or was it a bank robbery?"

Not even the misery before me could prevent my smiling at the worthy captain's rapidly-conceived narrative of me. I was in no merry mood, however, and turning to him grasped his hand.

"It may happen," said I, "that we never meet again. I know not, indeed I hardly care, what is before me; but with all my heart I thank you for your kindness—farewell."

"Farewell," said he, half mechanically, as he grasped my hand in both of his, and the large tears rolled down his cheeks. "Poor fellow! all my fault—see it now."

I hurried after Barton down stairs, a nervous choking in my throat nearly suffocating me. Just as I reached the door the carriage drew up, and a policeman let down the steps. Already my foot was on them, when Bubbleton was beside me—

"I'll go with him, major,—you'll permit me, won't you?"

"Not at present, captain," said Barton significantly; "it may happen that we shall want you one of these days—good-by."

He pushed me forward as he spoke, and entered the carriage after me. I felt the pressure of poor Bubbleton's hand as he pressed mine for the last time, and discovered he had slipped something into my palm at parting. I opened and found two guineas in gold, which the kind-hearted fellow had given me—perhaps they were his only ones in the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GAOL.

From the moment the carriage-door closed upon us, Barton never addressed one word to me, but, leaning back, seemed only anxious to escape being recognised by the people, whose attention was drawn to the vehicle by seeing two mounted policemen ride at either side of it. We drove along the quays, and, crossing an old dilapidated bridge, traversed several obscure and mean-looking streets, through which numbers of persons were hurrying in the same direction we were going. At length we arrived at a large open space, thronged with people, whose dress and appearance bespoke them from the country. They were all conversing in a low murmuring tone, and looking up from time to time towards a massive building of dark granite, which I had only to glance at to guess was Newgate. Our pace slackened to a walk as we entered the crowd; and while we moved slowly along, I was struck by the eager and excited faces I saw on every side. It could be no common occasion which impressed that vast multitude with the one character of painful anxiety I beheld. As they stood gazing with upturned faces at the frowning portals of the gaol, the deep solemn tolling of a bell rung out at the moment; and as its sad notes vibrated through the air, it seemed to strike with a mournful power on every heart in the crowd. In an instant, too, the windows of all the houses were thronged with eager faces; even the parapets were crowded, and while every sound was hushed, each eye was turned in one direction. I followed with my own whither the others were bent, and beheld above my head the dark frame-work of the "drop," covered with black cloth, above which a piece of rope swung, swayed backwards and forwards with the wind. The narrow door behind was closed, but it was clear that each second that stole by, was bringing some wretched criminal closer to his awful doom.

As we neared the entrance, the massive doors were opened on a signal from a policeman on the box of the carriage, and we drove inside the gloomy vestibule. It was only then, as the heavy door banged behind me, that my heart sank. Up to that moment a mingled sense of wrong, and a feeling of desperate courage had nerved me; but suddenly a cold chill ran through my veins, my knees smote each other, and fear, such as till then I never knew, crept over me. The carriage-door was now opened, the steps lowered, and Barton descending first, addressed a few words to a person near him, whom he called Mr. Gregg.

It was one of those moments in life in which every passing look, every chance word, every stir, every gesture, are treasured up, and

remembered ever after: and I recollect now, how, as I stepped from the carriage, a feeling of shame passed across me lest the by-standers should mark my fear, and what a relief I experienced on finding that my presence was unnoticed; and then the instant after that very same neglect, that cold, cold indifference to me, smote as heavily on my spirits, and I looked on myself as one whose fate had no interest for any—in whose fortune none sympathized.

"Drive on," cried a rough voice to the coachman, and the carriage moved through the narrow passage, in which some dozen of persons were now standing. The next moment a murmur of "they are coming," was heard, and the solemn tones of a man's voice chanting the last offices of the Romish church reached us, with the measured foot-fall of persons crossing the flagged court-yard. In the backward movement now made by those around me I was brought close to a small arched doorway, within which a flight of stone steps ascended in a spiral direction, and towards this point I remarked that the persons who approached were tending. My eyes scarcely glanced on those who came first, but they rested with a fearful interest on the bare-headed priest, who, in all the trappings of his office, walked, book in hand, repeating with mournful impressiveness the litany for the dead. As he came nearer I could see that his eyes were dimmed with tears, and his pale lips quivered with emotion, while his very cheek trembled with a convulsive agony. Not so he who followed. He was a young man, scarce four and twenty, dressed in loose white trowsers and shirt, but without coat, vest, or cravat; his head bare, and displaying a broad forehead, across which some straggling hairs of light brown were blown by the wind. His eye was bright and flashing, and in the centre of his pale cheek a small crimson spot glowed with a hectic colouring. His step was firm, and as he planted it upon the ground, a kind of elasticity seemed to mark his foot-fall. He endeavoured to repeat after the priest the words as they fell from him: but as he looked wildly around, it was clear his mind was straying from the subject which his lips expressed, and that thoughts far different were passing within him. Suddenly his eyes fell upon the major, who stood close to where I was. The man started back, and for a second even that small spot of crimson left his cheek, which became nearly livid in its palor. A ghastly smile, that showed his white teeth from side to side, crossed his features, and with a voice of terrible earnestness, he said—

"'Tis easy for you to look calm, sir, at your mornin's work, and I hope you're plazed at it." Then frowning fearfully as his face grew purple, he added, "But by the eternal —— you'd not look that way av we two stood by ourselves on the side of Slieb-mish, and nothing but our own four arms between us."

The horrible expression of vengeance that lit up his savage face at these words, seemed to awe even the callous and stern nature of Barton himself. All his efforts to seem calm and at ease were for the moment unavailing, and he shrunk from the proud and flashing eye of the felon, as though he were the guilty one in the presence of his accuser.

Another stroke of the heavy bell rung out; the prisoner started, and,

turning round his head, seemed to peer anxiously through the crowd behind him, when his eyes fell upon the figure of a man apparently a year or two younger than himself, and whose features, even in their livid colouring, bore a striking resemblance to his own.

"Come, Patsy," cried he, "come along with us." Then turning to the gaoler, while his face assumed a smile, and his voice a tone of winning softness, he added—"It is my brother, sir, he is come up nigh eighty miles to see me, and I hope you'll let him come upon the drop."

There was something in the quiet earnestness of his manner in such a moment, that thrilled upon the heart more painfully than even the violent outbreak of his passion; and when I saw the two brothers hand in hand, march step by step along, and then disappear in the winding of the dark stair, a sick, cold feeling came over me, and even the loud shout that rent the air from the assembled thousands without, scarce roused me from my stupor.

"Come, sir," cried a man, who in the dress of an official had been for some minutes carefully reading over the document of my committal —"after me, if you please."

I followed him across the court-yard in the direction of a small building which stood isolated and apart from the rest, when suddenly he stopped, and carefully examining the paper in his hand, he said—

"Wait a moment, I'll join you presently."

With these words he hurried back towards the gate, where Barton still stood with two or three others. What passed between them I could not hear, but I could distinctly mark that Barton's manner was more abrupt and imperious than ever; and that while the gaoler—for such he was—expressed his scruples of one kind or another, the major would not hear him with patience, but turning his back upon him, called out loud enough to be heard even where I stood—

"I tell you, I don't care—regular or irregular—if *you* refuse to take him in charge, on your own head be it. We have come to a pretty pass, Pollock," said he, turning to a person beside him, "when there is more sympathy for a rebel in his majesty's gaol, than respect for a government officer."

"I'll do it, sir—I'll do it," cried the gaoler; saying which he motioned me to follow, while he muttered between his teeth—"there must come an end to this, one day or other."

With that he unlocked a strongly barred gate, and led me along a narrow passage, at the extremity of which he opened a door into a small and rather comfortably furnished room.

"Here, sir," said he, "you'll be better than where I have my orders to put you, and, in any case, I trust that our acquaintance will be but a short one."

These were the first words of kindness I had heard for some time past. I turned to thank the speaker, but already the door had closed, and he was gone.

The quickly succeeding incidents of my life—the dark destiny that seemed to track me—had given a reflective character to my mind while

I was yet a boy. The troubles and cares of life, that in manhood serve only to mould and fashion character, to call forth efforts of endurance, of courage, or ability, come upon us in early years with far different effect and far different teaching. Every lesson of deceit and duplicity is a direct shock to some preconceived notion of faith and honour; every punishment, whose severity in after years we had forgotten in its justice, has, to the eyes of youth, a character of vindictive cruelty. Looking only to effects, and never to causes, our views of life are one-sided and imperfect: the better parts of our nature will as often mislead us by false sympathy, as will the worse ones by their pernicious tendency.

From the hour I quitted my father's house to the present, I had seen nothing but what to me appeared the sufferings of a poor, defenceless people, at the hands of wanton tyranny and outrage. I had seen the peasant's cabin burned, because it had been a shelter to an outcast. I had heard the loud and drunken denunciations of a ruffian soldiery against those who professed no other object, who acknowledged no other wish than liberty and equality; and in my heart I vowed a rooted hate to the enemies of my country—a vow that lost nothing of its bitterness, because it was made within the walls of a prison.

In reflections like these my evening passed on, and with it the greater part of the night also. My mind was too much excited to permit me to sleep, and I longed for day-break with that craving impatience which sick men feel, who count the long hours of darkness, and think the morning must bring relief. It came at last, and the heavy, clanking sounds of massive doors opening and shutting—the mournful echoes that told of captivity and durance—sighed along the corridors, and then all was still.

There is a time in reverie when silence seems not to encourage thought, but rather like some lowering cloud to hang over and spread a gloomy insensibility around us. Long watching and much thinking had brought me now to this, and I sat looking upon the faint streak of sunlight that streamed through the barred window, and speculating within myself when it would fall upon the hearth. Suddenly I heard the sound of footsteps in the corridor, my door was opened, and the gaoler entered, followed by a man carrying my breakfast.

"Come, sir," said the former, "I hope you have got an appetite for our prison fare. Lose no time, for there is a carriage in waiting to bring you to the Castle, and the major himself is without."

"I am ready this moment," said I, starting up, and taking my hat, and notwithstanding every entreaty to eat, made with kindness and good-nature, I refused every thing, and followed him out into the court-yard, where Barton was pacing up and down, impatiently awaiting our coming.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CASTLE.

SCARCELY had the carriage driven from the gloomy portals of the gaol, and entered one of the long, straggling streets that led towards the river, when I noticed a singular-looking figure who ran alongside, and kept up with us as we went. A true type of the raggedness of old Dublin, his clothes fluttered behind him like ribbons; even from his hat, his long red hair straggled and streamed, while his nether garments displayed a patchwork no tartan could vie with; his legs were bare, save where a single top-boot defended one of them, the other was naked to the foot, clad in an old morocco slipper, which he kicked up and caught again as he went with surprising dexterity, accompanying the feat with a wild yell which might have shamed a war-whoop; he carried a bundle of printed papers over one arm, and flourished one of them in his right hand, vociferating something all the while with uncommon energy. Scarcely had the carriage drawn up at the door of an old-fashioned brick building when he was beside it.

"How are ye, major? How is every bit of you, sir? Are ye taking them this mornin'?—'tis yourself knows how! Buy a ha'porth, sir."

"What have you got to-day, Toby?" said the major, with a greater degree of complacency in his manner than I had ever noticed before.

"An illigant new song about Buck Whaley; or maybe you'd like Beresford's jig, or the humours of Malbro' Green."

"Why, man, they're old these three weeks."

"Thrue for ye, major: begorra, there's no chating you at all, at all. Well, maybe you'll have this—Here's the bloody and cruel outrage com-mitted by the yeomen on the body of a dacent and respectable young man, by the name of Darby M'Keown, with the full and true account of how he was inhumanly stabbed and murdered on the 8th day of July——"

"Ay, give me that; I hope they've done for that scoundrel; I have been on his track three years."

The fellow drew near, and, as he handed the paper to the major, contrived to approach close to where I stood. "Buy one, master," said he, and as he spoke he turned completely round, so as only to be observed by myself, and as suddenly the whole expression of his vacant features changed like magic, and I saw before me the well-known face of Darby himself.

"Did you get an answer to that for me, Toby?" said the major.

"Yes, sir; here it is," and with that he pulled off his tattered hat, and withdrew a letter which lay concealed within the lining. "'Tis sixpence you ought to be afther givin' me this mornin', major," continued he, in an insinuating tone of voice; "the devil a less than twenty-

one mile it is out of this, not to spake of the danger I run, and the boys out on every side o' me."

"And what's the news up the country, Toby?" asked the major, as he broke the seal of the letter.

"'Tis talking of a risin' they do be still, sir——av the praties was in, glory be to God, they say it 'ill be a great sayson."

"For which, Toby—the cups or the croppies?"

"Yes, sir," replied Toby, with a most provoking look of idiotcy. "And you won't buy Darby, sir?" rejoined he, flourishing the printed placard. "No matter; here's the whole, full, thrue, and particular account," and so he turned the angle of the building, and I could hear his voice mingling with the street noises as he wended his way down Dame-street. The major looked after him, and smiled, and brief as was that smile, I saw in it how thoroughly he was duped.

"Come, sir, follow me, if you please," said he, addressing me.

I mounted a flight of old and neglected stairs, and entered an anteroom, where, having waited for a few seconds, the major whispered an order to the porter, and passed on to the inner room, leaving me behind.

As Major Barton passed out by one door, the porter turned the key in the other, and, placing it in his pocket, drew his chair to the window and resumed the newspaper he was reading when we entered. How long I waited I cannot say. My thoughts, though sad ones, chased each other rapidly, and I felt not the time as it passed. Suddenly the door opened, and I heard my name called. I drew a deep breath, like one who felt his fate was in the balance, and entered.

The room, which was plainly furnished, seemed to serve as an office. The green-covered table that stood in the middle was littered with letters and papers, among which a large heavy-browed, dark-featured man was searching busily as I came in. Behind, and partly beside him, stood Barton, in an attitude of respectful attention, while, with his hand to the fire, was a third person, whose age might have been from thirty-five to forty. His dress was in the perfection of the *mode*, his top-boots reaching down to the middle of his leg—his blue coat, of the lightest shade of sky blue, was lined with white silk, and two watch chains hung down beneath his buff waistcoat, in the *acmé* of the then fashion. His features were frank and handsome, and, saving a dash of puppyism that gave a character of weakness to the expression, I should deem him a manly, fine-looking fellow.

"So this is your 'Robespierre!' major—is it?" cried he, bursting into a laugh, as I appeared.

Barton approached nearer to him, and muttered something in a low, mumbling tone, to which the other seemed to pay little, if any, attention.

"You are here, sir," said the dark-featured man at the table, holding in his hand a paper as he spoke—"you are here, under a warrant of the privy council, charging you with holding intercourse with that rebellious and ill-fated faction, who seek to disturb the peace and welfare of this country—disseminating dangerous and wicked doctrines, and being in alliance with France—with France——what's that word, Barton ——to——"

"In two words, young gentleman," said the young man at the fire, "you are charged with keeping very bad company—learning exceedingly unprofitable notions, and incurring very considerable present risk. Now, I am not disposed to think that, at your age, and with your respectable connections, either the cause or its associates, can have taken a very strong hold of your mind. I am sure that you must have received your impressions, such as they are, from artful and designing persons, who had only their own ends in view when involving you in their plots. If I am justified in this opinion, and if you will pledge me your honour——"

"I say, Cooke, you can't do this. The warrant sets forth——"

"Well, well, we'll admit him to bail."

"It is not bailable, right honourable," said Barton, addressing the large man at the table.

"Phelan," said the younger man, turning away in pique, "we really have matters of more importance than this boy's case to look after."

"Boy as he is, sir," said Barton, obsequiously, "he was in the full confidence of that notorious French captain for whose capture you offered a reward of one thousand pounds."

"You like to run your fox to earth, Barton," replied the under-secretary calmly, for it was he who spoke.

"An alliance with France," continued the dark man, reading from the paper, over which he continued to pore ever since, "for the propagation—ay, that's it—the propagation of democratic——"

"Come, come, Browne, never mind the warrant; if he can find bail—say five hundred pounds—for his future appearance, we shall be satisfied."

Browne, who never took his eyes from the paper, and seemed totally insensible to every thing but the current of his own thoughts, now looked up, and, fixing his dark and beetling look upon me, uttered in a deep, low tone—

"You see, sir, the imminent danger of your present position, and at the same time the merciful leniency which has always characterized his majesty's government—ahem! If, therefore, you will plead guilty to any transportable felony, the grand jury will find true bills——"

"You mistake, Browne," said Cooke, endeavouring with his handkerchief to repress a burst of laughter, "we are going to take his bail."

"Bail!" said the other, in a voice, and with a look of amazement, absolutely comic.

Up to this moment I had not broken silence, but I was unable to remain longer so.

"I am quite ready, sir," said I, resolutely, "to stand my trial for any thing laid to my charge. I am neither ashamed of the opinions I profess, nor afraid of the dangers they involve."

"You hear him, sir, you hear him," said Barton, triumphantly, turning toward the secretary, who bit his lip in disappointment, and frowned on me with a mingled expression of anger and warning.—"Let him only proceed, and you'll be quite satisfied, on his own showing, that he cannot be admitted to bail."

"Bail," echoed the right honourable, whose faculties seemed to have stuck fast in the mud of thought, and were totally unable to extricate themselves.

At the same moment, a gentle tap was heard at the door, and the porter entered with a card, which he delivered to the secretary.

"Let him wait," was the brief reply, as he threw his eyes over it. "Captain Bubbleton," muttered he, between his teeth. "Don't know him."

I started at the name, and felt my cheek flush; he saw it at once.

"You know this gentleman, then?" said he mildly.

"Yes; to his humanity I am indebted for my life."

"I think I shall be able to show, sir," said Barton, interposing, "that through this Burke's instrumentality a very deep scheme of disaffection is at this moment in operation among the troops in garrison. It was in the barrack at George's-street where I apprehended him."

"You may withdraw, sir," said the secretary, turning towards me. "Let Captain Bubbleton come in."

As I left the room, the burly captain entered; but so flurried and excited was he, that he never perceived me, as we passed each other.

I had not been many minutes in the outer room, when a loud laugh attracted me, in which I could distinctly recognise the merry cadence of my friend Bubbleton, and shortly after the door was opened, and I was desired to enter.

"You distinctly understand, then, Captain Bubbleton," said Mr. Cooke, "that in accepting the bail in this case, I am assuming a responsibility which may involve me in trouble?"

"I have no doubt of it," muttered Barton, between his teeth.

"We shall require two sureties of five hundred pounds each."

"Take the whole myself, by Jove," broke in Bubbleton, with a flourish of his hand.—"In for a penny—eh, Tom?"

"You can't do that, sir," interposed Barton.

The secretary nodded an assent, and for a moment or two, Bubbleton looked nonplussed.

"You'll of course have little difficulty as to a co-surety," continued Barton, with a grin. "Burke 'of ours' is sufficiently popular in the forty-fifth to make it an easy matter."

"True," cried Bubbleton, "quite true; but in a thing of this kind, every fellow will be so deuced anxious to come forward—a kind of military feeling you know."

"I understand it perfectly," said Cooke, with a polite bow; "although a civilian, I think I can estimate the '*esprit du corps*' you speak of."

"Nothing like it, nothing like it, by Jove. I'll just tell you a story—a little anecdote in point. When we were in the Neelgharries, there was a tiger devilish fond of one of ours—someway or other, Forbes, that was his name.——"

"The tiger's?"

"No! the captain's. Forbes had a devilish insinuating way with

him—women always liked him—and this tiger used to come in after mess and walk round to where he was sitting, and Forbes used to give him his dinner, just as you might a dog——"

The Castle clock struck three just at this moment; the secretary started up——

"My dear captain," cried he, putting his hand on Bubbleton's arm, "I never was so sorry in my life; but I must hurry away to the privy council. I shall be here, however, at four; and if you will meet me at that time with the other security, we can arrange this little matter at once." So saying, he seized his hat, bowed politely round the room, and left us.

"Come along, Tom," cried Bubbleton, taking me by the arm; "devilish good fellow, that; knew I'd tickle him with the tiger; nothing to what I could have told him, however, if he had waited."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Barton, interposing between us and the door, "Mr. Burke is in custody until the formality at least of a bail be gone through."

"So he is," said Bubbleton, "I forgot all about it. So good-by, Tom, for half an hour; I'll not be longer, depend on it."

With this he shook me warmly by the hand, bustled out of the room, and hurried down stairs, humming a tune as he went, apparently in capital spirits, while I knew from his manner that the bail he was in search of, had about as much existence as the tiger in the Neelgharries.

"You can wait in this room, sir," said Barton, opening the door of a small apartment which had no other exit save through this office. I sat down in silence and in sorrow of heart, to speculate on, as well as I was able, the consequences of my misfortune. I knew enough of Bubbleton to be certain that all chance of assistance in that quarter was out of the question—the only source he could draw upon being his invention—the only wealth he possessed, the riches of his imagination—which had, however, this advantage over any other species of property I ever heard of — the more he squandered it, the more affluent did he become. Time wore on; the clock struck four; and yet no appearance of Bubbleton. Another hour rolled by—no one came near me, and at length, from the perfect stillness without, I believed they had forgotten me.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BAIL.

Six o'clock, seven, and even eight struck, and yet no one came. The monotonous tread of the sentry on guard at the Castle-gate, and the occasional challenge to some passing stranger, were the only sounds I heard above the distant hum of the city, which grew fainter gradually as evening fell. At last I heard the sound of a key moving in a lock, the bang of a door, and then came the noise of many voices, as the footsteps mounted the stairs, amid which Bubbleton's was pre-eminently loud. The party entered the room next to where I sat, and from the tones, I could collect that Major Barton and Mr. Cooke were of the number. Another there was, too, whose voice, though not absolutely new or strange to my ears, I could not possibly charge my memory where I had heard it before.

While I was thus musing, the door opened noiselessly, and Bubbleton entering without a word, closed it behind him, and approached me on tip-toe.

"All right, my boy; they're doing the needful outside; ready in ten minutes; never was such a piece of fortune; found out a glorious fellow; heard of him from Hicks, the money-lender; he'll go security to any amount; knows your family well; knew your father, grandfather I believe; delighted to meet you; says he'd rather see you than fifty pounds!"

"Who is he, for heaven's sake?" said I impatiently; for it was a new thing to me to receive any thing like kindness on the score of my father's memory.

"Eh! who is he? He's a kind of a bill-broking, mortgaging, bail-giving, devilish good sort of fellow. I've a notion he'd do a bit of something at three months."

"But his name; what's he called?"

"His name is——let me see; his name is——but who cares for his name; he can write it I suppose, and on a stamp, my boy—that's the mark. Bless your heart, I only spoil a stamp when I put my autograph across it—it would be worth prime cost till then.——What a glorious thing is youth—unfledged, unblemished youth—to possess a name new to the Jews—a reputation against which no one has 'protested.' Tom Burke, my boy, I envy you. Now, when I write George Frederick Augustus Bubbleton on any bill, warrant, or quittance, straightway there's a grin around the circle—a kind of a d——d impertinent sort of a half-civil smile, as though to say '*nulla bona*,' payable nowhere; but hold! that was a tap at the door—oh, they want us."

So saying, the captain opened the door and introduced me.

"I say, Tom," cried he, "come here, and thank our kind friend, Mr.——Mr. ——"

"Mr. Basset," said I, starting back, as my eyes beheld the pale, sarcastic features of the worthy attorney, who stood at the table, conversing in a low tone with the under-secretary.

"Eh! what's the matter?" whispered Bubbleton, as he saw my colour come and go, and perceived that I leaned on a chair for support. "What the devil's wrong now?"

"You've betrayed me to my greatest enemy," said I, in a low, distinct voice.

"Eh! what!—why you seem to have nothing but foes in the world. Confound it, that's always my luck—my infernal good-nature is everlastingly making a wrong plunge."

"In that case, if I understand the matter aright, the bail is unnecessary," said Mr. Cooke, addressing Basset, who never turned his head to the part of the room where we stood.

"No, sir; it is not necessary. While the law assists me to resume my guardianship of this young gentleman, I am answerable for his appearance."

"The indentures are quite correct," said Barton, as he laid the papers on the table, "as I believe Mr. Basset's statement to be also."

"No bail necessary," interrupted Bubbleton, rubbing his hands pleasantly, "so much the better. Wish them good evening, Tom, my hearty; we shall be back in time for supper. You wouldn't take an oyster, Mr. Cooke?"

"I thank you very much, but I am unfortunately engaged."

"Not so fast, captain, I beg you," said Basset, with a most servile, but malignant expression in his features. "The habits I would inculcate to my apprentice are not exactly consistent with mess-parties and barrack-suppers."

"Apprentice! apprentice!" said Bubbleton, starting as if stung by a wasp. "Eh! you're surely not——not the——the——"

"Yes, sir; there's the indenture, signed and sealed, if you are desirous to satisfy yourself. The young gentleman himself will not deny his father's instructions concerning him."

I hung down my head abashed and ashamed. The tears started to my eyes; I turned away to wipe them, and feared to face the others again; I saw that Bubbleton, my only friend, believed I had practised some deceit on him—and how to explain, without disclosing what I dare not! There was a bustle in the room—a sound of voices—the noise of feet descending the stairs; and when I again looked round, they were all gone, save Basset, who was leisurely collecting his papers together, and fastening them with a string. I turned my eyes everywhere, to see if Bubbleton had not remained. But no, he had left me like the rest, and I was alone with the man I most dreaded and disliked of all the world.

"Well, sir," said Basset, as he thrust the papers into the pocket of his great coat, "I'm ready now."

"Where to, sir?" replied I, sternly, as he moved to leave the room; for without thinking of how and why I was to succeed in it, a vague resolution of defiance flitted through my mind.

"To *my* house, sir, or to Newgate, if you prefer it. Don't mistake, young gentleman, for a moment the position you occupy—you owe your liberation at this moment not to any merits of your own. Your connection with the disaffected and rebellious body is well known: my interest with the government is your only protection. Again, sir, let me add, that I have no peculiar desire for your company in my family: neither the habits nor the opinions you have acquired will suit those you'll meet there."

"Why, then, have you interfered with me?" said I passionately. "Why not have left me to my fate? Be it what it might, it would have been not less acceptable, I assure you, than to become an inmate of your house."

"That question were very easily answered," said he, interrupting me.

"Then why not do so?"

"Come, come, sir, these are not the terms which are to subsist between us, nor is this the place to discuss our difference. Follow me."

He led the way down stairs as he spoke, and, taking my arm within his, turned into the street. Without a word on either side we proceeded down Parliament-street, and crossing Essex-bridge followed the quays for some time, then turning into Stafford-street we arrived at a house, when having taken a latch-key from his pocket, Basset opened the door and ushered me in, muttering half aloud as he turned the key in the lock, and fastened the bolt, "safe at last." We turned from the narrow hall into a small parlour, which, from its dingy furniture of writing-desk and stools, I guessed to serve as an office. Here my companion lit a candle from the embers of the fire, and having carefully closed the door he motioned me to a seat.

"I have already told you, sir, that I am not in the least covetous of your company in my house—circumstances, which I may or may not explain hereafter, have led me to rescue you from the disgrace you must eventually have brought upon your family."

"Hold, sir, I have none, save a brother——"

"Well, sir, and your brother's feelings are, I trust, not to be slightingly treated—a young gentleman whose position and prospects are of the very highest order."

"You are his agent, I perceive, Mr. Basset," said I, with a significant smile.

"I am, sir," replied he, with a deep flush that mounted even to his forehead.

"Then let me save you all further trouble on my account," said I calmly. "My brother's indifference to me or my fate has long since absolved me from any regret I might feel for the consequences which my actions might induce on *his* fortunes. His own conduct must stamp him, as mine must me. I choose to judge for myself, and not even Mr. Basset shall decide for me, although I am well aware his powers of discrimination have had the double advantage of experience on both sides of the question."

As I said this, his face became almost livid, and his white lips quivered with passion. He knew not before that I was acquainted with his history, nor that I knew of his having sold to the government, information, which brought his schoolfellow and benefactor to the scaffold.

"Come, come," continued I, gaining courage, as I saw the effect my words produced. "It is not your interest to injure me, however it may be your wish. Is there no arrangement we can come to, mutually advantageous? We shall be but sorry companions. I ought to have some property under my grandfather's will."

"There is, I believe, five hundred pounds," said Basset, with a slow distinctness, as if not rejecting the turn the conversation had taken.

"Well, then, what will you take and cancel that indenture? You don't set a very high value on my services, I suppose."

"You forget, I perceive," said he, "that I am answerable for your future appearance if called on."

"There was no bail-bond drawn out, no sum mentioned, if I mistake not, Mr. Basset."

"Very true, sir, very true; but I pledged myself to the law adviser—my character is responsible."

"Well, well, let me have two hundred pounds—burn that cursed indenture——"

"Two hundred pounds! Do you fancy then that you are in the possession of this legacy? Why, it never may, in all likelihood it never will, be yours—it's only payable on your attaining your majority."

"Give me one hundred pounds, then—give me fifty—let me only be free, at liberty, and not absolutely a beggar on the streets."

Basset leaned his head on the chimney, and seemed sunk in reflection, while I, wound up to the highest pitch of excitement, trod up and down the room—pouring forth from time to time short and broken sentences, declaratory of my desire to surrender all that I might chance to inherit by every casualty in life to my last guinea, only let there be no constraint on my actions—no attempt to control my personal liberty.

"I see," cried I, passionately, "I see what hampers you—you fear I may compromise my *family!* It is my brother's fair fame you are thinking of; but away with all dread on that score—I'll leave Ireland—I have long since determined on that."

"Indeed!" said Basset slowly, as he turned round his head, and looked me full in the face. "Would you go to America, then?"

"To America! no—to France! that shall be the land of my adoption, as it is this moment of all my heart's longings."

His eyes sparkled, and a gleam of pleasure shot across his cold features, as if he caught a glow of the enthusiasm that lit up mine.

"Come," cried he, "I'll think of this—give me till to-morrow, and if you'll pledge yourself to leave Ireland within a week——"

"I'll pledge myself to nothing of the kind," replied I fiercely. "It is to be free—free in thought as in act, that I would barter all my prospects with you. There must be but one compact between us—it must begin and end here. Take a night if you will to think it over; and to-morrow morning——"

"Well, then, to-morrow morning be it," said he, with more of animation in his tone, "and now to supper."

"To bed, rather," said I, "if I may speak my mind, for rest is what I now stand most in need of."

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. BASSET'S DWELLING.

EXCEPTING the two dingy-looking, dust-covered parlours, which served as office and dining-room, the only portion of Mr. Basset's dwelling untenanted by lodgers were the attics. The large brass plate that adorned the hall-door, setting forth in conspicuous letters, "Anthony Basset, attorney," gave indeed a most inadequate notion of the mixed population within, whose respectability, in the inverse ratio of their height from the ground, went on growing beautifully less, till it found its culminating point in the host himself, on whose venerable head the light streamed from a cobweb-covered pane in the roof. The stairs were dark and narrow, the walls covered with a dull-coloured old wainscot, that flapped and banged with every foot that came and went, while the windows were defended by strong iron railings, as if any thing inside them could possibly demand such means of protection.

I followed Mr. Basset as he led the way up these apparently interminable stairs, till at length the decreasing head-room betokened that we were near the slates. Mumbling a half apology for the *locale*, he introduced me into a long, low attic, where a settle-bed of the humblest pretensions, and a single rush-bottomed chair supporting a basin, were the only articles of furniture. Something like the drop curtain of a strolling theatre closed up the distance; but this I could only perceive imperfectly by the dim twilight of a dipt candle; and in my state of fatigue and weariness, I had little inclination to explore further. Wishing me a good night, and promising that I should be called betimes next morning, Mr. Basset took his leave, while I, overcome by a long day of care and anxiety, threw myself on the bed, and slept far more soundly than I could have believed it were possible for me to do under the roof of Anthony Basset.

The sun was streaming in a rich flood of yellow light through a small sky-light, and playing its merry gambols on the floor when I awoke. The birds, too, were singing; and the hum of the street noises, mellowed by distance, broke unpleasantly on the ear. It did not take me long to remember where I was, and why. The conversation of

the evening before recurred at once to my mind, and hope, stronger than ever before I felt it, filled my heart. It was clear, Basset could place little value on such services as mine; and if I could only contrive to make it his interest to part with me, he would not hesitate about it. I resolved that whatever price he put upon my freedom, if in my power, I should pay it. My next plan was, to find out through some of the persons in correspondence with France the means of reaching that country, in whose military service I longed to enrol myself. Had I but the papers of my poor friend Charles de Meudon, there had been little difficulty in this; but, unfortunately, they were seized by Major Barton on the day of his death, and I had never seen them since.

While I revolved these thoughts within myself I heard the merry notes of a girl's voice, singing, apparently, in the very room with me. I started up and looked about me, and now perceived that what seemed so like a drop-curtain the night before, was nothing more or less than a very large patch-work quilt, suspended on a line across the entire attic, from the other side of which came the sounds in question. It was clear, both from the melody and the voice, that she could not be a servant; and somewhat curious to know more of my fair neighbour, I rose gently, and slipping on my clothes, approached the boundary of my territory with noiseless step.

A kind of whistling noise interrupted every now and then the lady's song, and an occasional outbreak of impatience would burst forth in the middle of the "Arrah, will you marry me, dear Alley Croker," by some malediction on a "black knot" or a broken string. I peeped over the "drop," and beheld the figure of a young, plump, and pretty girl, busily engaged in lacing her stays—an occupation which accounted equally for the noise of the rushing stay-lace and the bit of peevishness I had heard. I quite forgot how inadvisable was the indulgence of my curiosity in my admiration of my fair neighbour, whose buxom figure, not the less attractive for the shortness of her drapery, showed itself to peculiar advantage as she bent to one side and the other in her efforts to fasten the impracticable boddice. A mass of rich brown hair, on which the sun was playing, fell over her neck and on her shoulders, and half concealed her round, well-turned arms as they plied their busy task.

"Well, ain't my heart broke with you entirely!" exclaimed she, as a stubborn knot stopped all further progress. At this moment the cord, on which through inadvertence I had leaned somewhat too heavily, gave way, and down came the curtain with a squash to the floor. She sprang back with a bound, and, while a slight but momentary blush flushed her cheek, stared at me half-angrily, and then cried out—"Well, I hope you like me?"

"Yes, that I do," said I, readily—"and who wouldn't that saw you?"

Whether it was the *naïveté* of my confession, or my youth, or both, I can't well say; but she laughed heartily at my speech, and threw herself into a chair to indulge her mirth.

"So we were neighbours, it seems," said I.

"And if we were," said she, roguishly, "I think it's a very unceremonious way you've opened the acquaintance."

"You forget, apparently, I haven't left my own territory."

"Well, I'm sure I wish you would, if you're any good at a black knot: my heart and my nails are both broke with one here."

I didn't wait for any more formal invitation, but stepped at once over the frontier—while she, rising from the chair, turned her back towards me, as with her finger she directed me to the most chaotic assemblage of knots, twists, loops, and entanglements, I ever beheld.

"And you're Burke, I suppose," cried she, as I commenced my labours.

"Yes, I'm Burke."

"Well, I hope you're done with wildness by this time. Uncle Tony tells fine tales of your doings."

"Uncle Tony! So you're Mr. Basset's niece—is that so?"

"You didn't take me for his wife, I hope," said she, again bursting out into laughter.

"In truth, I never thought so well of him as to suppose it."

"Well, well, I'm sure it's little I expected you to look so mild and so quiet; but you needn't pinch me for all that. Isn't your name Tom?"

"Yes, I hope you'll always call me so."

"Maybe I will. Isn't that done yet? and there's the milk bell. Uncle will be in a nice passion if I'm not down soon—cut it—cut it at once."

"Now do be patient for a minute or two—it's all right if you stay quiet. I'll try my teeth on it."

"Yes, but you needn't try your lips too," said she, tartly.

"Why, it's the only plan to get your fingers out of the way. I'm sure I never was so puzzled in all my life."

"Nothing like practice, my boy, nothing!" cried a merry voice from the door behind me, half choked with laughing, while a muttered anathema, in a deeper tone, followed. I looked back, and there stood Bubbleton, his face florid with laughter, endeavouring to hold back Mr. Basset, whose angry look and flashing eye there was no mistaking.

"Mr. Burke—Burke, I say——Nelly, what does this mean? How came this young gentleman——"

"As to that," said I, interrupting him, and my blood somewhat chafed by his manner, "this piece of trumpery tumbled down when I leaned my arm on it. I had no idea——"

"No, no; to be sure not," broke in Bubbleton, in an ecstacy. "The thing was delicious; such a bit of stage effect. She was there, as it might be, combing her hair, and all that sort of thing. Tom was here raving about absence, and eternal separation. You are an angry father, or uncle—all the same: and I'm Count Neitztachenitz, the old friend and brother-officer of Tom's father. Now let Miss Nelly—but where is she? why she's gone! Eh, and Basset, Basset——why he's gone! Come, Tom, don't you go too. I say, my boy, devilish well got up

that. You ought to have had a white satin doublet and hose, slashed with pale cherry colour ribbons to match, small hat looped, aigrette and white plume. She was perfect—her leg and foot were three certain rounds of applause from the pit and gallery."

"What nonsense," said I angrily; "we weren't playing a comedy."

"Weren't you though? well, I'm deuced sorry for it, that's all; but it did look confoundedly like an undress rehearsal."

"Come, come, no foolery, I beg. I'm here in a very sad plight, and this piece of nonsense may not make matters any better. Listen to me, if you can, patiently for five minutes, and give me your advice."

I took him by the arm as I spoke, and leading him from the room, where I saw that every thing was only suggesting some piece of scenic effect, and in as few words as I could command, explained how I was circumstanced; omitting of course any detail of my political bias, and only stated so much of my desires as implied my wish to be free of my contract with Basset, and at liberty to dispose of myself as I liked in future.

"I see," cried Bubbleton, as I finished; "the old fox has this five hundred pounds of yours."

"No, I didn't say that; I only mean——"

"Well, well, it's all the same. If he hasn't, you know, he ought."

"No; that's not essential either."

"No matter, he would if he could; it just comes to the same thing: and you only wish to get clear out of his hands at any cost. Isn't that it?"

"Exactly; you have it all perfectly."

"Bless your heart, boy, there's nothing easier. If I were in your place, I should arrange the affair in less than a week. I'd have fits—strong fits, and burn all the papers in the office during the paroxysm. I'd make a pile of deeds, leases, bonds, and settlements in the back yard."

"I don't fancy your plan would be so successful as you flatter yourself," said a dry husky voice behind: "there's rather a stringent law for refractory apprentices, as Mr. Burke may learn." We turned round, and there stood Mr. Basset, with a grin of most diabolical malignity in his by no means pleasant features. "At the same time," continued he, "your suggestions are of infinite value, and shall be duly appreciated in the King's Bench."

"Eh—King's Bench! Lord bless you, don't speak of it. Mere trifles—I just threw them out as good hints. I had fifty far better to come. There's the young lady now—to be sure, he has started that notion himself, so I must not pretend it was mine; but Miss Nelly, I think, Tom——"

"Mr. Basset is well aware," interrupted I, "that I am only desirous to be free and untrammelled; that whatever little means I may derive from my family, I'm willing to surrender all, short of actual beggary, to attain this object—that I intend quitting Ireland at once. If then he consent to enter into an arrangement with me, let it be at once, and on the spot. I have no desire, I have no power to force him by a threat, in case of refusal; but I hope he will make so much of amend to one, of whose present desolation and poverty he is not altogether innocent."

"There, there; that's devilish well said; the whole thing is all clear before me. So come along, Basset, you and I will settle all this. Have you got a private room where we can have five minutes' chat together? Tom, wait for me here."

Before either of us could consent or oppose his arrangement, he had taken Basset's arm, and led him down stairs, while I, in a flurry of opposing and conflicting resolves, sat down to think over my fortunes.

Tired at length with waiting, and half suspecting that my volatile friend had forgotten me and all my concerns, I descended to the parlour in hopes to hear something of the pending negotiation. At the head of a long narrow table sat my fair acquaintance, Miss Nelly, her hair braided very modestly at each side of her pretty face, which had now assumed an almost Quakerish propriety of expression. She was busily engaged in distributing tea to three pale, red-eyed, emaciated men, whose spongy-looking, thread-bare garments bespoke to be attorneys' clerks: a small imp, a kind of embryo practitioner, knelt before the fire in the act of toasting bread; but followed with his sharp piercing eyes every stir in the apartment, and seemed to watch with malicious pleasure the wry faces around, whenever any undue dilution of the bohea, or any curtailment of the blue milk pressed heavily on the guests. These were not exactly the circumstances to renew my acquaintance with my fair neighbour, had I been so minded; so having declined her offer of breakfast, I leaned moodily on the chimney-piece, my anxiety to know my fate becoming each instant more painful. Meanwhile, not a word was spoken—a sad moody silence, unbroken save by the sounds of eating, pervaded all, when suddenly the door of the front parlour was flung open, and Bubbleton's pleasant voice was heard as he talked away unceasingly; in an instant he entered followed by Basset, over whose hard countenance a shade of better nature seemed to pass.

"In that case," cried the captain, "I'm your man, not that I'm any thing of a performer at breakfast or dinner; supper's rather my forte—an odour of a broiled bone at three in the morning, a herring smeared with chetna, and grilled with brandy, two hundred of small oysters, a few hot ones to close with, a glass of Seltzer dashed with Hollands, for health, and then, any number you like of glasses of hot brandy and water afterwards for pleasure."

While Bubbleton ran on in this fashion, he had broken about half a dozen eggs into the slop basin, and seasoning the mess with pepper and vinegar, was busily engaged in illustrating the moderation of his morning appetite.

"Try a thing like this, Tom," cried he, not defining how it was to be effected under the circumstances, while he added in a whisper, "your affair's all right?"

These few words brought courage to my heart; and I ventured to begin the breakfast that had lain untasted before me.

"I think, Mr. Burke," said Basset, as soon as he recovered from the surprise Bubbleton's mode of breakfasting had excited—"I think and trust that all has been arranged to your satisfaction:" then turning to the clerks, who eat away without even lifting their heads, "Mr. Mug-

gridge, you will be late at the master's office; Jones, take that parcel to Hennett; Kit, carry my bag up to the courts."

Miss Nelly did not wait for the part destined for her; but with a demure face rose from the table and left the room, giving me, however, one sly glance as she passed my chair, that I remembered for many a day after.

"You'll excuse me, gentlemen, if I am pressed for time this morning—a very particular case comes on in the Common Pleas."

"Never speak of it, my dear fellow," said Bubbleton, who had just addressed himself to a round of spiced beef,—"business has its calls, just as pleasure has—ay, and appetite too.——That would make an excellent bit of supper, with some mulled port, after a few rubbers of shorts."

Basset paid little attention to this speech; but turning to me, continued,

"You mentioned your intention of leaving Ireland, I think; might I ask where you have decided on——from where——It is possible that your brother ——"

"My brother's anxieties on my account, Mr. Basset, can scarcely be very poignant, and deserve no particular respect or attention at my hands. I suppose that this morning has concluded all necessary intercourse between us; and if you have satisfied my friend Captain Bubbleton——"

"Perfectly, perfectly——another cup of tea, if you please——yes, nothing could be more gratifying than Mr. Basset's conduct—you are merely to sign the receipt for the legacy, and he hands you over one hundred pounds; isn't that it?"

"Yes, quite correct; my bill for one hundred at three months."

"That's what I mean; but surely you're not done breakfast—why, Tom, you've eaten nothing—I have been picking away this half hour, just to encourage you a bit—well, well, I lunch in Stephen's-green at three, so here goes."

Mr. Basset now took from his pocket-book some papers, which, having glanced his eye over, he handed to me.

"This is a kind of acknowledgment, Mr. Burke, for the receipt of a legacy to which you could be only entitled on attaining your majority; here are your indentures to me, and this is my acceptance for one hundred pounds."

"I am content," said I, eagerly, as I seized the pen. The thought of my liberty alone filled my mind, and I cared little for the conditions, provided I secured *that*.

Basset proffered his hand; I was in no humour to reject any thing that even simulated cordiality; I shook it heartily. Bubbleton followed my example, and, having pledged himself to see more of his pleasant acquaintance, thrust his arm through mine, and bustled out, adding in a tone loud enough to be overheard—"Made a capital fight of it—told him you were a defender, a united Irishman, a peep-o'-day boy, and all that sort of thing—devilish glad to get rid of you, even on Miss Nelly's account," and so he rattled away without ceasing, until we found ourselves at the George's-street barracks, my pre-occupation of mind preventing my even having remarked what way we came.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS.

I WAS not sorry to find that Miss Bubbleton did not respond to the noisy summons of the captain as he flourished about from one room to the other, making the quarters echo to the sweet name of "Anna Maria." "Saladin," "Grimes," "Peter," were also shouted out unsuccessfully; and with a fierce menace against various grooms of the chambers, waiting-men, and lackeys, who happily were still unborn, Bubbleton flung himself into a seat, and began to conjecture what had become of the inhabitants.

"She's paying a morning call—gone to see the duchess—that's it, or perhaps she's looking over that suit of pearls I bought yesterday at Gallon's—pretty baubles, but dear at eight hundred pounds—never mind, what's money for—eh, Tom?"

As he looked at me for a reply I drew my chair closer towards him, and assuming as much of importance as my manner could command, I besought his attention for a moment. Hitherto, partly from my own indecision, partly from his flighty and volatile bearing, I never had an opportunity either to explain my real position or my political sentiments, much less my intentions for the future. The moment had at length arrived, and I resolved to profit by it; and, in as few words as I was able, gave a brief narrative of my life from the hour of my father's death to the day in which I fell into his own hands in Dublin, only omitting such portions as might, by the mention of names, compromise others concerned.

Nothing could possibly be more attentive than he was, during the entire detail—he leaned his head on his hand, and listened with eager curiosity to all my scrapes and difficulties, occasionally nodding in assent, and now evincing by his excited air his desire to learn further; and when I at last wound up by avowing my long-cherished desire to enter the French service, he sat perfectly silent and seemed to reflect gravely on the whole.

"I say, Tom," said he at length, as he stared me full in the face, and laid his hand impressively on my knee, "there's good stuff in that—excellent stuff! depend upon it!"

"Good stuff! what do you mean?" said I, in amazement.

"I mean," replied he, "there's bone in it, sinew in it, substance in it—there are some admirable situations too. How Fulham would come out in Tony Basset—brown shorts, white stockings, high shoes and buckles—his own very costume; and there's that little thing Miss Booth, for Nelly, give her a couple of songs, ballad airs take best; Williams should be Barton—a devilish fine villain in coarse parts, Williams. I think I see him stealing along by the flats with his soldiers to the attack.

Then the second act should open—interior of hut—peasants round a table—eating always successful on the stage—nothing like seeing a fat fellow bolting hard eggs, and blustering out unpronounceable jokes over a flagon of coloured water—you by right should have your own part—splendid thing—devilish fine, your sensations when the cabin was on fire, and the fellows were prodding about with their bayonets to discover you."

"And who's to perform Captain Bubbleton?" asked I, venturing for once to humour his absurdity.

"Eh?—oh, there's nothing for me, no marked feature, nothing strong, nothing characteristic. That has been through life my greatest, my very highest ambition—that no man should ever detect by any thing in my manner, my dress, or my style of conversation, that I was not John Nokes, or Peter Styles. You'll meet me at a dinner party, Tom, you'll converse with me, drink with me, we'll sit the evening together, grow intimate—perhaps you'll borrow fifty pounds of me, and yet I'd wager another, you'd never guess that I rode a hippopotamus across the Ganges after tiffin one day, to pay my respects to the governor-general. That, let me tell you, Tom, is the very proudest boast a man can make. Do you see that scar? It looks nothing now—that was a bite from a ferocious boa; the villain got into my room before breakfast, he had eaten my chokadar, a fellow I was very fond of——"

"Ah, I remember you mentioned that to me. And now to come back to my dull story, to which I assure you, however dramatic you may deem it, I'd prefer adding an act or so before it comes before the world. I intend to leave this to-morrow."

"No, no, you mustn't think of it yet awhile—why, my dear fellow, you've a hundred pounds—only think of that; twenty will bring you to Paris, less if you choose. I once travelled from Glugdamuck to the Ghauts of Bunderamud for half a rupee—put my elephants on three biscuits a day—explained to them in Hindostanee, a most expressive language, that our provisions had fallen short—that on our arrival all arrears of grub should be made up. They tossed up their trunks thus in token of assent, and on we marched. Well, when we came to Helgie, there was no water——"

"Very true," interrupted I, half in despair at the torrent of story-telling I had got involved in; "but you forget I have neither elephants nor camels, nor coolies, nor chokadars—I'm a mere adventurer with, except yourself, not a friend in the world."

"Then why not join us?" cried the ever-ready captain. "We are to have our orders for foreign service in a few weeks—you've only to volunteer; you've money enough to buy your kit. When you're fairly in, it's only writing to your brother; besides, something always turns up: that's my philosophy. I rarely want any thing I don't find means to obtain, somehow or other."

"No," said I, resolutely, "I will never join the service of a country which has inflicted such foul wrong on my native land."

"All stuff and nonsense," cried Bubbleton. "Who cares the deuce of clubs about politics; when you're my age, you'll find that if you're

not making something of politics, they'll make very little of you. I'd as soon sell figs for my grocer, or snuff for my tobacconist, as I'd bother my head governing the kingdom for Billy Pitt—he's paid for it; that's his business, not mine. No, no, my boy, join us—you shall be '*Burke of ours*'—we'll have a glorious campaign among the Yankees. I'll teach you the Seneca language—and we'll have a ramble through the Indian settlements. Meanwhile, you dine to-day at the mess; to-morrow, we pic-nic at the Dargle; next day, we——what the deuce is next day to be——oh, yes, next day we all dine with you. Nothing stiff or formal—a snug, quiet thing for sixteen—I'll manage it all."

Here was an argument there was no resisting, so I complied at once, comforting myself with a silent vow come what might I'd leave Ireland the day after my dinner-party.

Under whatever guise, with what history of my rank, wealth, and family influence, Bubbleton thought proper to present me to his brother officers I cannot say; but nothing could possibly be more kind, or even more cordial, than their reception of me; and although I had some difficulty in replying to questions put under mistaken notions of my position and intentions, I readily followed, as far as I was able, the line suggested by my imaginative friend, whose representations, I suspected, would be received with a suitable limitation by his old associates.

There is, perhaps, no species of society so striking and so captivating to the young man entering on life, as that of a military mess. The easy, well-bred intimacy, that never degenerates into undue familiarity—the good-humoured, playful raillery, that never verges on coarseness or severity—the happy blending of old men's wisdom and young men's buoyancy—are all very attractive features of social intercourse, even independently of the stronger interest that invests the companionship of men whose career is arms. I felt this; and enjoyed it too not the less pleasantly that I discovered no evidence of that violent partizan feeling I had been led to believe was the distinguishing mark of the royalist soldier. If by chance any allusion was made to the troubles of the period, it was invariably done rather in a tone of respect for mistaken and ill-directed political views, than in reprehension of disloyalty and rebellion; and when I heard the dispassionate opinions, and listened to the mild counsels of these men, whom I had always believed to be the veriest tyrants and oppressors, I could scarcely credit my own senses, so utterly opposed were my impressions and my experience. One only of the party evinced an opposite feeling. He was a pale, thin, rather handsome man, of about five and twenty, who had lately joined them from a dragoon regiment, and who, by sundry little innuendos, was ever bringing uppermost the preference he evinced for his former service, and his ardent desire to be back again in the cavalry.

Captain Montague Crofts was, indeed, the only exception I witnessed to the almost brotherly feeling that prevailed in the forty-fifth. Instead of identifying himself with the habits and opinions of his brother officers, he held himself studiously apart. Regarding his stay in the regiment like a period of probation, he seemed resolved to form

neither intimacies nor friendships, but to wait patiently for the time of his leaving the corps, to emancipate himself from a society below his caste.

The cold, repulsive, steady stare, the scarcely-bowed head, the impassive silence with which he heard the words of Bubbleton's introduction of me, formed a strong contrast with the warm cordiality of the others; and though at the time little disposed to criticise the manner of any one, and still less to be dissatisfied with any thing, I conceived from the moment a dislike to Captain Crofts, which I felt to increase with every minute I spent in his company. The first occasion which suggested this dislike on my part was, from observing that while Bubbleton—whose historical accuracy, or blind adherence to reality, no one in the corps thought of requiring—narrated some of his incredible adventures, Crofts, far from joining in the harmless mirth which such tales created, invariably took delight in questioning and cross-questioning the worthy captain, quoting him against himself, and playing off a hundred tricks which, however smart and witty in a law court, are downright rudenesses when practised in society. Bubbleton, it is true, saw nothing in all this save the natural interest of a good listener: but the others did; and it was quite clear to me, that while one was the greatest favourite in the regiment, the other had not a single friend amongst them. To me, Crofts manifested the most perfect indifference—not ever mixing himself in any conversation in which I bore a part. He rarely turned his head towards the part of the table at which I sat; and by an air of haughty superciliousness gave me plainly to understand that our acquaintance, though confessedly begun, was to proceed no further. I cannot say how happy I felt to learn, that one I had so much cause to dislike, was a violent aristocrat, an ultra-Tory—a most uncompromising denouncer of the Irish liberal party, and an out-and-out advocate of severe and harsh measures towards the people. He never missed an opportunity for the enunciation of such doctrines, which, whatever might be the opinions of the listeners, there was, at the time I speak of, no small risk in gainsaying; and this immunity did Crofts enjoy to his heart's content.

Slight as these few reminiscences of the mess are, they are the called-up memories of days not to be forgotten by me. For now, what with my habitual indecision on the one hand, and Bubbleton's solicitations on the other, I continued to linger on in Dublin, leading the careless, easy life of those about me, joining in all the plots for amusement which the capital afforded, and mixing in every society to which my military friends had access. Slender as were my resources, they sufficed, in the eyes of all who knew not their limit, to appear abundant. Crofts was the only rich man in the regiment; and my willingness to enter into every scheme of pleasure, regardless of cost, impressed them all with the notion that Bubbleton for once was right, and that "Burke was a kind of west-country Crœsus," invaluable to the regiment.

Week after week rolled on, and still did I find myself a denizen of George's-street: the silly routine of the barrack life filled all my

thoughts, save when the waning condition of my purse would momentarily turn them towards the future; but these moments of reflection came but seldom, and at last came not at all. It was autumn—the town almost divested of its inhabitants, at least of all who could leave it; and along the parched, sun-burnt streets, a stray jingle or a noddy was rarely seen to pass. The squares, so lately crowded with equipages and cavalcades of horsemen, were silent and deserted; the closed shutters of every house, and the grass-grown steps, vouched for the absence of the owners. The same dreamy lethargy that seemed to rest over the deserted city, appeared to pervade every thing; and save a certain subdued activity among the officials of the Castle—a kind of ground-swell movement that boded something important—there was nothing stirring. The great measure of the "Union," which had been carried on the night of the riots, had however annihilated the hopes of the Irish liberal party; and many who once had taken a leading part in politics had now deserted public life for ever.

They with whom I associated cared but little for these things. There were but two or three Irish in the regiment, and they had long since lost all their nationality in the wear and tear of the service; so that I heard nothing of what occupied the public mind, and lived on in the very midst of the threatening hurricane, in a calm as deep as death itself.

I had neither seen Barton nor Basset since the day of my leave-taking; and, stranger still, never could meet with Darby, who seemed to have deserted Dublin. The wreck of the party he belonged to seemed now effectually accomplished, and the prospect of Irish independence was lost, as it seemed, for ever.

I was sitting one evening in the window of Bubbleton's quarters, thinking over these things, not without self-reproach for the life I was leading, so utterly adverse to the principles I had laid down for my guidance. I thought of poor De Meudon, and all his ambitious dreams for my success, and I felt my cheek flush with shame for my base desertion of the cause to which, with his dying breath, he devoted me. I brought up in memory those happy evenings, as we wandered through the fields talking over the glorious campaigns of Italy, or speculating on the mighty changes we believed yet before us; and then I thought of the reckless orgies in which my present life was passed. I remembered how his full voice would falter when one great name fell from his lips; and with what reverence he touched his chapeau as the word "Buonaparte" escaped from him!—and how my heart thrilled to think of an enthusiasm that could light up the dying embers of a broken heart, and make it flash out in vivid brilliancy once more! and longed to feel as he did.

For the first time for some weeks I found myself alone. Bubbleton was on guard; and though I had promised to join him at supper, I lingered at home, to think and ponder over the past: I scarcely dared to face the future. It was growing dusky. The rich golden arch of an autumn moon could be seen through the hazy mist of that half frost which is at this season the sure harbinger of a hot day on the mor-

row. The street noises had gradually died away, and save the distant sound of a ballad-singer, whose mournful cadence fell sadly on the ear, I heard nothing.

Without perceiving it, I found myself listening to the doggrel of the minstrel, who, like most of her fellows of the period, was celebrating the means that had been used by government to carry their favourite measure, the union with England. There was, indeed, very little to charm the ear, or win the sense, in either the accent or the sentiment of the melody; yet somehow she had contrived to collect a pretty tolerable audience, who moved slowly along with her down the street, and evinced by many an outburst of enthusiasm how thoroughly they relished the pointed allusions of the verse, and how completely they enjoyed the dull satire of the song.

As they approached the barracks, the procession came to a halt, probably deeming that so valuable a lesson should not be lost to his majesty's service; and, forming into a circle around the singer, a silence was commanded—when, with that quavering articulation so characteristic of the tribe, and that strange quality of voice that seems to alternate between a high treble and a deep bass, the lady began—

"Don't be crowdin' an me that a way. There it is now—ye're tearin' the cloak off the back o' me! Divil receave the note I'll sing, if ye don't behave——And look at his honour up there, wid a tenpenny bit in the heel of his fist for me. The Lord reward your purty face—'tis yourself has the darlin' blue eyes!——Bad scran to yez, ye blaggards—look at my elegant bonnet the way you've made it!"

"Arrah! rise the tune, and don't be blarneying the young gentleman," said a voice from the crowd; and then added, in a lower but very audible tone—"Them chaps hasn't a farthin' beyond their pay—three and ninepence a day, and find themselves in pipeclay!"

A rude laugh followed this insolent speech; and the ballad-singer, whose delay had only been a *ruse* to attract a sufficient auditory, then began to a very well-known air—

"Come hither, M.P.'s, and I'll tell
My advice, and I'm sure you'll not mock it:
Whoe'er has a country to sell,
Need never want gold in his pocket.
Your brother a bishop shall be—
Yourself—if you only will make a
Voice in our ma-jo-rity—
We'll make you chief judge in Jamaica.
Tol, lol de rol, tol de rol lay!"

The mob-chorus here broke in, and continued with such hearty enthusiasm, that I lost the entire of the next verse in the tumult.

"Your father, they say, is an ass,
And your mother, not noted for knowledge;
But he'll do very well at Madras,
And she shall be provost of college.

Your aunt, lady's-maid to the queen;
And Bill, if he'll give up his rakin',
And not drunk in day-time be seen,
I'll make him a rosy archdeacon.
Tol, lol de rol, tol de rol lay!

A jollier set ne'er was seen,
Than you'll be, when freed from your callin',
With an empty house in College-green—
What an elegant place to play ball in
Ould Foster stand by with his mace,
He'll do mighty well for a marker;
John Toler——"

"Here's the polis!" said a gruff voice from the crowd; and the word was repeated from mouth to mouth in every accent of fear and dread, while in an instant all took to flight, some dashing down obscure lanes and narrow alleys, others running straight onwards towards Dame-street, but all showing the evident apprehension they felt at the approach of these dreaded officials. The ballad-singer alone did not move. Whether too old or too infirm to trust to speed, or too much terrified to run, I know not; but there she stood, the last cadence of her song still dying on her lips, while the clattering sounds of men advancing rapidly were heard in the distant street.

I know not why, some strange momentary impulse, half pity, half caprice, moved me to her rescue, and I called out to the sentry—"Let that woman pass in!" She heard the words, and with an activity greater than I could have expected, sprang into the barrack-yard, while the police passed eagerly on in vain pursuit of their victims.

I remained motionless in the window-seat, watching the now silent street, when a gentle tap came to my door. I opened it, and there stood the figure of the ballad-singer, her ragged cloak gathered closely across her face with one hand, while with the other she held the bundle of printed songs, her only stock in trade.

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